



# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **EPA grants emergency exemption to battle sericea lespedeza in Kansas rangeland and pastures**

TOPEKA - The Kansas Department of Agriculture today announced that the Environmental Protection Agency has granted an emergency exemption to use Vista<sup>®</sup>, an herbicide manufactured by Dow AgroSciences, to control sericea lespedeza (*Lespedeza cuneata*) in Kansas rangeland and permanent grass pastures.

“Sericea lespedeza has been very aggressive in Kansas, and it is crowding out desirable native grasses,” said Jamie Clover Adams, Kansas Secretary of Agriculture. “EPA’s exemption means ranchers and land managers will have access to a cost-effective tool to tackle this noxious weed.”

Because of its persistent and invasive spread, the Kansas Legislature made sericea lespedeza a statewide noxious weed effective July 1, 2000. Currently it infests about 500,000 acres, primarily in the eastern third of the state, although it has rapidly spread westward in the last several years.

Sericea lespedeza is a perennial legume native to east Asia that was first introduced into the United States in 1896 and in Hays, Kansas, in the 1930s. More recently, it was introduced to land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program when grass seed contaminated with sericea lespedeza seed was sown on those acres.

Initially sericea lespedeza was valued for its erosion control, hay and wildlife habitat, although recent research reveals that the plant is opportunistic and it decreases biodiversity where it is allowed to propagate unchecked. It robs neighboring plants of moisture, and it emits allelopathic chemicals that inhibit desirable plants.

“It is unfortunate that sericea got a strong foothold in Kansas before we understood its true nature,” Adams said. “Now it must be brought under control before it does irreparable harm to our prairie ecosystem and decreases even more of the available forage for our livestock and wildlife. The emergency exemption granted by EPA will be a great help.”

According to the terms of the EPA exemption, Vista<sup>®</sup> mixed with Remedy<sup>®</sup> may be used to treat sericea lespedeza-infested rangeland and permanent grass pastures between May 1 and July 30. Some restrictions that affect how the Vista<sup>®</sup>/Remedy<sup>®</sup> mix may be used include:

- Commercial applications must be made by a business that is properly licensed under the Kansas Pesticide Law.

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- Applicators and growers are subject to all applicable restrictions, precautions and use requirements printed on the EPA-approved product labels for Vista® and Remedy®.
- All restrictions, precautions and use requirements printed on the Section 18 supplemental label must be followed.
- Grazing and haying restrictions for Vista® use under this exemption are the same as for Remedy®.
- Special restrictions to protect threatened and endangered species apply. Information about protected species is available from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks at (785) 296-2281, or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at (785) 539-3474.

The Vista®/Remedy® mix should cost qualified landowners less than \$10 per acre, or about \$5 per acre less than other available herbicide treatments. The cost difference is due to the enhanced control that is expected from the mixture and a reduction in the amount of treatment that is needed.

More information about using the Vista®/Remedy® mix is available from the Kansas Department of Agriculture's pesticide and fertilizer program at (785) 296-3786, or from county weed directors' offices.

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**Useful websites:**

<http://www.accesskansas.org/kda/Plantpest/Publicinfo/plant-publicoutreach-weeds.htm>

<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/sericeawork/>